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### **Committees:**

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Health Care  
Transportation



State  
Representative  
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### **Committees:**

Criminal Justice & Corrections (Chair)  
Select Committee on Community Security  
Capital Budget

# Winter 2002

## 1st District Update

Dear Neighbors,

By the time you receive this newsletter we will have begun the 2002 legislative session. The major issues before us include addressing our transportation problems, boosting our economy, protecting our communities, and cutting state spending.

The governor has presented a transportation plan to address the state's worst traffic chokepoints by raising the gas tax 9 cents per gallon and increasing certain fees on trucks and newly-purchased cars. Legislators are considering this and other options including sending such a plan to a public vote, but all sides are in clear agreement that we must do something this year to address our traffic mess.

Our transportation problems are not only impacting our quality of life, but also are damaging our economy as well. Some of our major employers have hinted that they may leave the state if our transportation problems are not fixed. Passage of a transportation plan that would provide as many as 20,000 new jobs is one measure we are considering to stimulate our state's economy. We are also looking at ways to fund increased job training and worker retraining programs.

Another top priority this session will be making the residents of our state feel more secure in their homes and in their communities. To address this issue, we have established a legislative committee on security. Rep. Al O'Brien will be serving on this new and vital committee.

Finally, the most daunting task before us this year will be reducing state spending. We will seek to do this in a manner that does not hurt our most vulnerable citizens — the elderly, the disabled, and low-income families — but this task will be very difficult. Inside we will examine some of the governor's proposed cuts and provide a section for you to offer feedback to us.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to represent you in Olympia and always feel free to contact us about an issue that concerns you. Please note we are sending this newsletter together to save money. We believe these are the most vital issues facing the state and in addressing them we will represent you as a team.

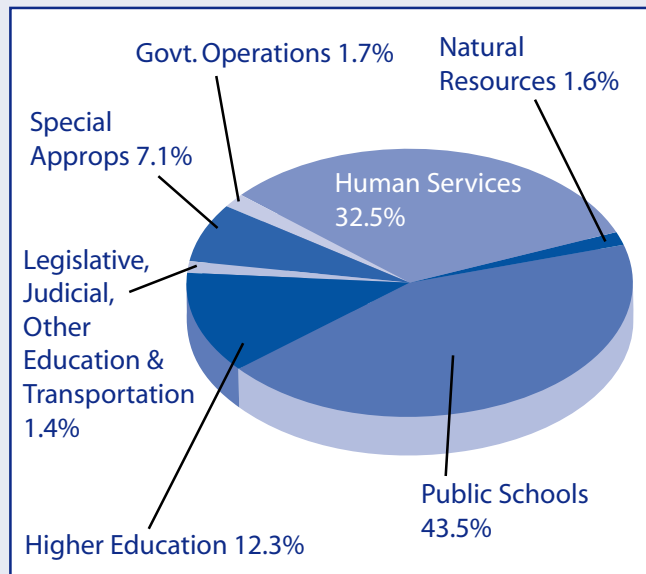
Sincerely,

Al O'Brien

Jeanne Edwards

## HOW WE GOT HERE

The budget we passed last June set expenditures at \$22.8 billion. The bulk of this budget invests in our public schools and social and health care services for the elderly, the disabled, and low-income families.



### Functional Area

### \$ In Thousands

Legislative, Judicial, Transportation, & Other Education Expenditures .....	305,513
Govt. Operations .....	392,304
Human Services .....	7,415,303
Natural Resources .....	355,477
Public Schools .....	9,903,086
Higher Education .....	2,800,460
Special Approps* .....	1,611,095

Courtesy Office of Program Research

\* Special appropriations are largely comprised of interest on debts and bonds along with assistance provided to local governments.

Our budget situation changed drastically when those four planes crashed into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a field in western Pennsylvania. During those moments, our nation's sense of security and our economy took a tremendous hit. Before September 11th, we were looking at a short economic downturn followed by strong economic growth in the year 2003. Once the attacks occurred, Boeing almost immediately announced layoffs of up to 30,000 employees.

The effect of these and other layoffs has put our state budget in a pinch. The latest revenue forecasts estimate that we will lose \$813 million in expected revenue through July 2003. Combined with increased expenses

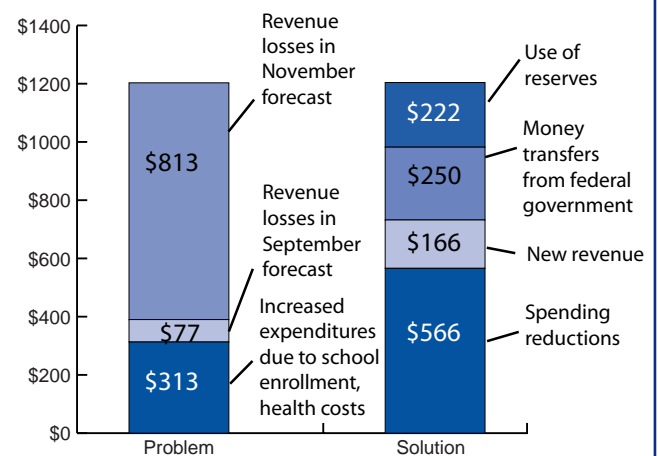
caused by more students in state schools, increased caseloads for the Department of Social & Health Services, high firefighting costs from the past summer, and expensive lawsuits against the state, the operating budget will likely fall short by \$1.25 billion. To bring the budget into balance will require some deep cuts.

## THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET PROPOSAL

On December 18th, the governor unveiled his proposed 2002 Supplemental Budget which addresses the \$1.25 billion budget gap with:

- New budget reductions of \$566 million
- New revenue increases of \$166 million (projected)
- Additional money transfers of \$250 million from the federal government
- \$222 million taken from reserve funds

### Governor's Proposed Supplemental Budget



Courtesy Senate Committee Services

## Budget Cuts

The proposed budget reductions include \$235 million in cuts from social and health services. Among the major cuts will be a reduction of Medicaid payments to pharmacies and assisted living facilities, lower payments to nursing homes, a reduction in community mental health services, and diminished funding for several programs designed to serve at-risk youth. A number of programs in the juvenile and criminal justice system will be scrapped or reduced sharply including efforts to tackle truancy, the elimination of the Mission Creek Youth Camp for juvenile offenders, and a cut in funding for child care services.

# 2002 1st District Update



Several other cost-saving measures include requiring state employees to pay more of their health insurance premiums, trimming higher education funding (while allowing schools to raise their own tuition), cutting some funding from several K-12 grant programs, and eliminating the Washington State Library.

## Revenue Increases

The governor's budget also recommends several revenue increases including an increase in taxes on card rooms, pull-tabs, punchboards, and liquor. Additionally, the governor recommends that the state join the "Big Game" multi-state lottery, a proposal that could generate \$25 million for the state. Finally, the governor is recommending that the state seek increased revenue from the federal government for services provided by the state including nursing home care and other services for the elderly.

At the Legislature, we are now charged with reviewing the governor's proposed plan, altering it where appropriate, and passing a budget into law. We are deeply concerned about some of the governor's proposed cuts. Many residents of our state may not feel the impact of the looming cuts. They are very fortunate. However, those who have a disabled relative or an elderly parent who needs in-home care will surely feel the impact of our reduced spending. Many of these cuts will be difficult to make. We will try to make the necessary cuts in a manner that does not harm our most vulnerable citizens.

## TRANSPORTATION

In December, the governor also unveiled a transportation plan that was nearly identical to the proposal that failed last session. The transportation system continues to receive inadequate funding, remaining at the same level it received 20 years ago. However, one change that has occurred since we considered transportation proposals last summer is that gas prices have fallen to their lowest level since 1998.

It is urgent that we address our transportation problems, but we want to be sensitive to the concerns of the residents of our district. As your representatives, we are prepared to make the tough decisions about transportation revenue and spending.

### **REP. O'BRIEN NAMED TO COMMUNITY SECURITY COMMITTEE, REP. EDWARDS RETAINED AS VICE CHAIR OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT & HOUSING COMMITTEE AND REJOINS TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

Rep. O'Brien was named to the Select Committee on Community Security responsible for overseeing the state's anti-terrorism efforts. Rep. O'Brien will also be serving as chair of the Criminal Justice & Corrections Committee and as a member of the Capital Budget Committee.

Rep. Edwards will retain her position as vice chair of the Local Government & Housing Committee. She will also serve on the critically important Health Care and Transportation Committees.

## COMMENTS

Please use this space to write comments about any issues or concerns you may have. Note: Due to election-year restrictions, we will only be able to respond to your comments if you request specific information.

Dear Representatives O'Brien and Edwards,

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Please cut out and send your comments to:

Rep. Al O'Brien  
Rep. Jeanne Edwards  
P.O. Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Sincerely,

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

# 2002 1st District Update



## LOCAL SCHOOLS EARN AWARDS FOR READING IMPROVEMENTS

In recent years we have passed several reforms asking a lot of our elementary schools. We are pleased to say that many of our local schools have responded. One important benchmark that we sought at the Legislature was for schools to achieve a 25% reduction in the number of 4th graders that failed the Washington Assessment of Student Learning test for reading within three years. These schools have made great strides through the efforts of teachers, administrators, staff, and of course, students and parents.

Below is a list of some of the schools in and around our community that have earned the Award of Reading Achievement this year.

### Lake Washington School District: Northshore School District: Everett School District: Edmonds School District:

Juanita  
Rose Hill  
Lakeview  
Mark Twain  
Henry David Thoreau  
Horace Mann  
Benjamin Franklin  
Alexander Graham Bell  
Robert Frost  
Benjamin Rush  
Helen Keller  
Carl Sandburg  
John Muir  
Peter Kirk  
Emily Dickinson  
Margaret Mead  
Norman Rockwell  
Samantha Smith  
Laura Ingalls Wilder  
Redmond

Arrowhead  
Cottage Lake  
Maywood Hills  
Moorlands  
Shelton View  
Wellington  
Hollywood Hill  
Sunrise  
Bear Creek  
Fernwood  
Frank Love  
Woodmoor  
East Ridge  
Crystal Springs

Madison  
Jackson  
Whittier  
Lowell  
View Ridge  
Emerson  
Jefferson  
Monroe  
Woodside  
Mill Creek  
Cedar Wood  
Silver Lake

Meadowdale  
Chase Lake  
Sherwood  
Edmonds  
Hazelwood  
Oak Heights  
Evergreen  
College Place



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